15th March 1929]

Irrigation

Auction of the right of cutting grass and enjoying the usufruct of trees standing on flood banks in Kistna and other districts.

* 1747 *Q.*—Mr. D. NARAYANA RAJU : Will the hon. the Member for Revenue be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the right to cut grass and enjoy the usufruct of trees standing on flood banks in the districts of Kistna, East Godavari, West Godavari and Guntur is ordinarily put to auction by Public Works Department authorities and leased out to the highest bidders ; and

(*b*) whether it is a fact that Government have refused to lease out the said rights to the concerned village panchayats in those four districts and if so, why ?

A.—(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Yes ; but the refusal is not in regard to the flood banks in these four districts only but generally. The reason is that it is essential to safeguard flood banks against all possibility of damage and that the best way to do this is to fix as far as practicable individual responsibility and liability for damage. In the case of a village panchayat individual responsibility is difficult to fix and it would be impracticable to recover compensation did any damage occur through the action of a panchayat lessee.

Mr. D. NARAYANA RAJU :—" May I know whether the Government will be pleased to lease these rights to village panchayats if the panchayats concerned are prepared to deposit the necessary security against any possibility of damage . . . ? "

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" That is a hypothetical question."

Mr. D. NARAYANA RAJU :—" May I know whether Government contemplate to extend it to all the canal and drain banks also ? "

The hon. Sir NORMAN MARJORIBANKS :—" At present the rule is only regarding flood banks."

Mr. A. KALESWARA RAO :—" May I know whether allowing the village panchayats to take these leases, etc., in auction would be more helpful to the villagers than by allowing it to individuals who might act in a selfish manner ? "

The hon. Sir NORMAN MARJORIBANKS :—" I really could not say. It all depends on circumstances "

Storage of water in the Veeranam tank.

* 1748 *Q.*—Swami A. S. SAHAJANANDAM : Will the hon. the Member for Revenue be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that two stop banks were formed some time back and strengthened recently curtailing the waterspread of Veeranam tank and thereby reducing its storage considerably ;

(*b*) whether it is a fact that the shutters over the Lalpet weir are higher by one foot than the present F.T.L. of Veeranam tank ;